

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC

TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 749

AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY

UNCLAS QUEBEC 280

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJECT: ELECTION ROUNDUP 1 FROM QUEBEC

1. QUEBEC S FIVE DAY OLD ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS BEGINNING TO TAKE FORM AS PARTIES ANNOUNCE CANDIDATES, REVEAL STRATEGIES AND ADJUST TACTICS TO OPPONENTS INITIATIVES. LIBERAL ELECTORAL MACHINE IS IN HIGH GEAR IN MOST OF PROVINCE. BOURASSA IS DISPLAYING HIS CUSTOMARY MASTERY OF ORGANIZATIONAL PREPARATION IN FRANCOPHONE AREAS, A FINE SENSE OF DRAMA AND A KEEN INSTINCT FOR THE EFFECTIVE USE OF RIDICULE IN POLITICS. THE PREMIER HAS MAINTAINED THE ATMOSPHERE OF SUSPENSE HE DEVELOPED DURING WEEKS OF UNCERTAINTY OVER TIMING OF ELECTION BY REVEALING NAMES OF LIBERAL SUPER-STARS HE IS ATTEMPTING INDUCE TO RUN IN QUEBEC ELECTION. WHILE USING EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO FOCUS VOTER ATTENTION ON DANGERS OF INDEPENDENCE, BOURASSA HAS GENOUSLY LADDLED RIDICULE ON P.Q. OVER FAILURE OF LE JOUR NEWSPAPER. MOREOVER, PREMIER HAS DREDGED UP GAFFE COMMITTED BY PQ FINANCIAL ADVISOR PARIZEAU DURING 1973 ELECTION WHEN LATER REVEALED PARTY S "YEAR ONE BUDGET." FINELY WELL FINANCED LIBERAL PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN IS IN FULL FLOOD. MAIN FOCUS OF ATTENTION HAS BEEN PARTI QUEBECOIS, WHICH IS OBVIOUSLY BEING TAKEN AS A SERIOUS THREAT. IN CONTRAST, BOURASSA HAS PUBLICLY DISMISSED UNION NATIONALE AND PARTI NATIONALE POPULAIRE AS BUMBLING IRRELEVANCIES.

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2. UNACCOUNTABLY, BOURASSA SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SURPRISED BY

EXTENT OF ANGLO AND ETHNIC DISGRUNTLEMENT. HE ONLY NOW IS FOCUSING ON DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES FOR HIS PARTY OF LARGE SCALE LOSS OF ANGLOPHONE VOTES AND IS ATTEMPTING LIMIT DAMAGE BY PERSONALLY RECRUITING ATTRACTIVE CANDIDATES FOR HEAVILY ANGLO AND ETHNIC CONSTITUENCIES.

3. PARTI QUEBECOIS HAS ALSO GOTTEN OFF TO EARLY STRONG START. QUIET EFFORTS OVER PAST THREE YEARS TO SPREAD PARTY APPARATUS THROUGHOUT PROVINCE AND TO AMASS FULL ELECTION TREASURY HAVE BORNE FRUIT. IDEOLOGICALLY ORIENTED FACTIONALISM HAS NOT COMPLETELY DISAPPEARED BUT P.Q. CANDIDATES ARE ATTEMPTING SUBMERGE DIFFERENCES FOR ELECTION DURATION. RENE LEVESQUE HAS DOWN-PLAYED INDEPENDENCE IN ATTEMPT BROADEN ISSUES AND FORCU ON INADEQUACIES OF GOVERNING LIBERALS. THIS TACTIC HAS DRAWN REACTION FROM THREE PARTY COLLEAGUES FROM MONTREAL S EAST END WHO INSIST INDEPENDENCE IS ESSENTIAL MEANS AS WELL AS END TO P.Q. PROGRAM. LEVESQUE ALSO SUDDENLY CHANGED HIS PREDICTION OF ELECTION RESULT TO ONE OF VICTORY FROM MORE MODEST EXPECTATION OF SUBSTANTIALY ENLARGED MINORITY.

4. P.Q. ALSO PULLED SOME STARS FROM ITS MAGIC CHAPEAU. CANDIDACIES OF WEIGHTY TV PERSONALITY, LISE PAYETTE, AND WORKER-PRIEST, JACQUE COUTURE, WHO RAN WELL AGAINST MAYOR DRAPEAU IN MONTREAL S LAST MUNICIPAL ELECTION, WERE LAUNCHED WITH FANFARE AND GOOD PROSPECTS. LEVESQUE HIMSELF HAS CAREFULLY CHOSEN TO CONTEST THE LARGE, ALMOST SOLIDLY FRANCOPHONE TAILLON CONSTITUENCY ACROSS THE ST. LAWRENCE FROM MONTREAL. HE PLANS TO CAMPAIGN VIGOROUSLY IN HIS RIDING RATHER THAN RISK A THIRD PERSONAL DEFEAT FROM WHICH HE COULD NOT POLITICALLY RECOVER.

5. UNION NATIONALE PRESIDENT, RODRIGUE BIRON, HAS BEEN AMAZINGLY ACTIVE IN THIS EARLY PHASE OF THE ELECTION. HIS MODERATE IF SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS STANCE ON THE APPLICATION OF LANGUAGE LAWS HAS ATTRACTED INTEREST AMONG ANGRY ANGLOPHONES. BIRON IS THE BENEFICIARY OF SUPPORT FROM YOUNG PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES IN MONTREAL S WEST-END. ACCORDING TO ONE WELL INFORMED SOURCE, TORIES HAVE HELPED RECRUIT ANGLOPHONE CANDIDATES AND ARE GIVING FULL SUPPORT TO UN IN ANGLOPHONE CONSTITUENCIES.

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6. THE UN HAS ALSO BEEN ACTIVE AMONG ITS TRADITIONAL CONSERVATIVE RURAL CONSTITUENTS. BIRON CONFIDENTLY PREDICTS THE ELECTION OF SOME 60 UN CANDIDATES. WHILE MOST OBSERVERS CONCEDE THAT A LARGE POTENTIAL VOTE MAY EXISTS AMONG DISGRUNTLED ANGLOPHONES AND AMONG FRANCOPHONE FEDERALISTS WHO HAVE BECOME DISSATISFIED WITH LIBERALS, THEY ARE NOT YET WILLING TO CONCEDE THAT BIRON AND HIS UN WILL BE BIG RECIPIENT OF PROTEST VOTE.

7. THE PARTI NATIONALE POPULAIRE (PNP) SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN LEFT AT THE POST. A "NATIONAL CONVENTION" IS SCHEDULED FOR THIS WEEKEND IN QUEBEC CITY COMPLETE WITH THE EXCITEMENT OF A PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST. HOWEVER, MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE THIS LEADERSHIP RACE WAS HASTILY CONTRIVED TO ATTRACT ATTENTION TO VIRTUALLY MORIBUND PARTY . PARTY PRESIDENT, JEROME CHOQUETTE, HAS ANNOUNCED HIS CANDIDACY IN THE LIBERAL HEARTLAND OF OUTREMONT. MANY ARE PREDICTING HE WILL LOSE SEAT HE GAINED WITH OVERWHELMING MAJORITY IN 1973 AS A LIBERAL.

8. FINALLY, THE NEWEST BORN OF QUEBEC S PARTIES, THE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE, FOUNDED BY MONTREAL REFORMIST MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS KEATON AND AUF DER MAUR, HAS JOINED THE RACE WITH EXPECTATIONS OF WINNING SEVERAL MONTREAL SEATS BY EXPLOITING - WITH OUT ACKNOWLEDGING IT IS DOING SO - THE EXPECTED ANGLO AND ETHNIC BACKLASH. THE RALLIEMENT CREDITISTE IS ALSO A MINOR, ALBEIT ACTIVE, ELEMENT IN THE ELECTION WITH LIMITED HOPES AND SMALLER PROSPECTS.  
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